



TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY
WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 2, 2021
6:30 PM

IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Amarche, Wheatley, Young, Urey (Absent), Givens
Consuella Barbour, Town Manager
Chief Ayers, Chief of Police
Greg Pinkney, Public Works Director
Brittany Gabriel, Office Manager

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Wheatley at 6:30 PM.

The Commission discussed the General Government Budget. The only line items that were changed were:

-5135 Office Expenses (increased from \$14,000 to \$16,000)

-Virtual Server Monthly Fee is a new line item (PEAKE suggested replacing the server. It would be storing our information to the virtual cloud PEAKE has)

-5085 Contractual Services (increased; this is for our Treasurers services. He has proposed going to a flat fee for the Town. The Commission wants to discuss further at the next meeting, comparing prices around municipalities, before making a decision) (increased from \$15,000 to \$24,000)

-5065 Emergency Relief Fund (decreased by \$5000)

The Commission discussed hazard pay for essential employees. At the height of the pandemic, the Commission decided to offer hazard pay to the essential employees. That hazard pay was covered by the CARES Act through the middle of December 2020. The Commission discussed how much money would come out of the salary line items if we continued to pay it out of the towns budget this year. It will cost \$12,000.00 to take it to the end of the year. The Commission discussed that it is unfair for essential employees to get the hazard pay when all employees are all back to work now. The Commission didn't see the need for the hazard pay to continue at this time.

The Commission discussed Black History Month. Currently the Town does not have any events planned for Black History Month. The Town has advertised other virtual Black History Month events going on in the area. The Commissioners suggested putting information on the cable channel highlighting different African Americans and what they accomplished, as a slideshow presentation.

The Commission discussed the Police Explorers Program with the Chief. They discussed what the program requirements are, what the guidelines are, and how the funding for the program works. The Chief mentioned this program is a national program and we are following their rules and guidelines. The Chief has already gotten \$1,500.00 in donations. The Town is a certified post now.

The Commission discussed the Port Towns Bus. Commissioner Givens discussed the billing for the bus particularly for the last quarter. He doesn't agree with the amount we are being billed. He believes it is too high per rider per trip. He suggested looking into another transportation service or programs that could help utilize our funding. The Commission would like to discuss and take a better look at the bus program.

The Commission discussed the Employee Handbook review. Ms. Barbour would like the handbook to be passed at the next town hall meeting if at all possible. The Commission decided to keep reviewing it and is looking to possibly pass it by the March meeting. A few commissioners requested to have a paper copy in their mailbox.

The Commission discussed weather related operations. Commissioner Givens was very dissatisfied with the recent snow storm and he discussed that the Public Works Department did not do a good job with plowing and disagreed with their whole assessment. Mr. Pinkney discussed his protocols and how he operated along with the rest of the Public Works crew while it was snowing. This snow storm had the streets covered very quickly towards the evening. The Commission would like to see improvement when it comes to snowy weather as well as a copy of the operating procedures.

The Commission discussed the Police General Orders for body worn cameras. Chief Ayers has gone through the General Orders and has made minor changes that need to be reviewed and hoped this could be done by the beginning of March. He would like to go live with the body worn camera policies by mid-February, early March. He would like the Commission to review the policy and hopefully vote on it at the next town hall meeting.

Public Comments - The Proctor family commented that they would love to see the Police Explorers Program keep going in the future and they are happy to help keep the program alive.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. Motion approved. Motion by: Young, Seconded by: Givens
Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Givens: Aye, Urey: Absent



TOWN OF COTTAGE CITY
TOWN HALL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2021
7:00 PM

IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Amarche, Wheatley, Young, Urey, Givens
Consuella Barbour, Town Manager
Kevin Best, Town Attorney
Anthony Ayers, Chief of Police
Greg Pinkney, Public Works Director
Mike Lightfield, Town Treasurer

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Wheatley at 7:00pm.

Motion to approve the minutes and financials for January 2021.

Motion by: Givens; Seconded by: Urey

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

Public Comments – Gloria Albright from Delegate Fennell's office introduced herself, and discussed that she will be attending meetings from now on representing Delegate Fennell.

The Commission discussed the General Orders for the police Explorers program; the Chief tailored them to the Town specifically. Every Explorer will sign a release form.

Motion to approve the General Orders for the police Explorers program.

Motion by: Givens; Seconded by: Amarche

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

Resolution 2021-01 – A resolution concerning COVID-19 Hazard Pay for Essential Personnel of the Town of Cottage City. The Town of Cottage City Commissioners no longer desires to provide hazard pay to essential employees.

Motion to pass Resolution 2021-01. Motion by: Givens; Seconded by: Young

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

The Commission discussed the Old Port Towns Motors building located at 3800 Bladensburg Road. Someone has hit the small building that is behind the main building. The Chief and the Code Enforcement Officer have gone out to assess the property and they have posted the building. The Fire Department has posted it as well, deeming it a dangerous building and no one should go into the building. The Commissioners discussed if they would approve some type of emergency abatement. We do not have funding in place for a project this size. The property owner pays the liens of the property, but nothing is being replaced or fixed. Code Enforcement has talked to the owner numerous times and stressed the safety concerns to him. Commissioner Givens suggested giving the owner a chance to make the repairs, get the County to come out to condemn the building, and have our attorney write a strong letter in hopes that he will take it more seriously. Chief stated that the County has already condemned the building. The Commission would like to give the owner a little more time to rectify the situation. The Town Attorney

discussed that the Town has a hazardous building provision in our code that lays out a process we can follow. He recommended that our ordinances be updated so that the town has more latitude for enforcing this type of situation. The municipality has to take action and is primarily responsible, not the County. The Town has every authority to abate this nuisance and recoup losses. The Commission decided that something definitely needs to be done sooner rather than later. The Chief discussed it's impractical to board the building, and that can aggravate the situation further. They agreed with the Chief's recommendation. Commissioner Young wanted to make sure in the letters we would send, the owner would have to assure that there are no people living in the building.

Motion to approve sending a letter allowing the owner the chance to put up some type of notice not to trespass for example: fencing/boarding/packers/barriers, etc. (until Wednesday, February 17, 2021) to correct the issue of closing/sealing off the building to the public. Also to sending a second letter that would be the actual citation of all the codes he is in violation of, giving him 10 days to rectify the situation.

Motion by: Young; Seconded by: Amarche

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

Ms. Barbour has completed an annual report for 2020. Reverend Addison from End Time Harvest Ministries has a publication that they are selling to raise awareness on various issues, and she would like the Commission to help promote the publication in our town newsletter. The Commission agreed to promote it. The Administrative office has gotten a free trial of Jook, a text messaging service. We have a data base from the food giveaways and other events that we can already add resident's numbers through. Ms. Barbour looked into a Lyft pass to subsidize rides for residents. There is a voucher system with taxis as well that other localities are using. Ms. Barbour sent all the information to the Commissioners for their review. The Commissioners want a binder to be in the office that has a hard copy of all resolutions and ordinances in it for when the public would want to review. Ms. Barbour discussed that a spreadsheet will also be put on the website showing all Resolutions and Ordinances passed. Ms. Barbour and Commissioner Wheatley discussed having a Black History Month Event Date. Commissioner Wheatley, Commissioner Amarche, and resident Fred Hill will discuss a date and they will get back to the Commission. Colmar Manor will be watching a movie from PBS and will have a discussion and activities afterwards.

The Commission discussed the Port Towns Bus. They are looking into alternatives due to the amount our town is charged. They are concerned that we do not have many residents riding and are being charged a lot.

Public Works Report - The Public Works Building fence is up and Mr. Pinkney is waiting for a lockbox that the county requested us to have. The County will install the lockbox and then it will be finished. He spoke to the resident near the building that was complaining about his grass being ridden on. Mr. Pinkney will rectify the situation by planting seeds in the springtime. A resident also complained there is a pine tree that sits on our property but hangs over a resident's porch, the pine needles fall everywhere. He is wondering if the Commission would be willing to cut the tree down. The Town sign in front of the town hall has been painted. They are waiting to paint the poles that hold the signs up. They are waiting for the weather to be a little better to do this. Dumpster Day has been recommended to be done in March or April.

Police Department Report - 43rd Avenue project: SHA advised us that they are going to be responsible regarding the regrading of the roadway in front of their storm drain. He would like permission to try to get them to set a date in the spring for the work to be done. He would also in the meantime, like permission to move forward for CPJ to write them a letter to say we could get the work done, pay for the

grading initially, and ask for a reimbursement. Senator Augustine recommended this option. All the Commissioners agreed that this would be a good option.

Ward 1 Report - No report.

Ward 2 Report - No report.

Ward 3 Report - No report, but Commissioner Wheatley discussed that she attended a meeting with Delegate Fisher and SHA and they talked about 43rd Avenue and a part of a pedestrian bridge over Dueling Creek that has collapsed and it hasn't been repaired. The bridge belongs to PG County and what SHA wants to do in the immediate future is to put signage up to have people cross over the street earlier. She also stated that she appreciates Commissioner Amarche and Mr. Hill for taking the initiative to do something for Black History Month.

Ward 4 Report - No report.

At Large Report - Commissioner Urey keeps getting complaints about the compare foods store and the pricing.

Public Comments - No public comments.

Motion to go into closed session at 9:37pm to discuss a personnel matter.

Motion by: Young; Seconded by: Amarche

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye

MOTION PASSED.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm. Motion approved. Motion by: Amarche; Seconded by: Young

Amarche: Aye, Wheatley: Aye, Young: Aye, Urey: Aye, Givens: Aye